Why Language Matters for Equitable Quality Education

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The term “Equitable Education” emerged in USA in the 1960’s related to non-English speaking students.

Equal Access

- Facilities
- Books
- Teachers

Equitable Education

- Burden of learning in a “foreign” language
"We take it as axiomatic...that the best medium for teaching is the mother tongue of the pupil."
-UNESCO, 1953

"UNESCO discovered mother tongue, then forgot about it for 50 years."
-Sheldon Shaeffer
"UNESCO supports mother tongue instruction as a means of improving educational quality....[and] promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies."

-UNESCO 2003
Revision of the UNESCO “Education in a multilingual world” position paper - Language expert meeting

When, Local Time: From Jul 15, 2022, 2:30 PM To Jul 18, 2022, 5:30 PM
Where: Online from Paris, France
Contact: --
Event Type: Working group meeting

Experts on language and education will discuss key issues in languages and education with a view to revise and update the UNESCO Education in a multilingual world position paper. The overall aim is to support language policies in favour of inclusion in education, the development of multilingual education based on mother tongues, multilingualism, and linguistic diversity.

The process of revision and the revised position paper output contribute to the International community’s efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 of quality education for all by 2030. The position paper will support the implementation of the Global Action Plan of the UN International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032).
Welcome to the International Decade of Indigenous Languages

Building a global community for the preservation, revitalization and support of indigenous languages worldwide

#IDIL2022-2032: a global ...
617 MILLION

Children and youth will not develop basic literacy & numeracy skills (UIS, 2017)
AN ESTIMATED 40% OF GLOBAL POPULATION DO NOT RECEIVE EDUCATION IN A LANGUAGE THEY SPEAK OR UNDERSTAND.
Share of children aged 7 to 14 with foundational reading and numeracy skills (National Statistical Office and UNICEF, 2019)
Growing Evidence Base for Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education
National literacy assessment results for reading, academic year 2015-16

Passing rate combined for science, math, Thai, reading (grades 1-6, cohorts 1 & 2)
The Investment Case for
EDUCATION AND EQUITY

unify for children
## Figure 13. Highly effective practices to increase access and learning outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother-tongue / bilingual instruction</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Source: Education Commission analysis (2016)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better teaching methods</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing remedial education</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cut waste – double learning time</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Group by ability</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Update teachers on student progress</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher performance incentives</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Preschool (learning effect by grade 5)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student performance incentives</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>New school in village</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community-based monitoring</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School feeding</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer-assisted learning and materials</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Malaria prevention and control</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Washrooms and water</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash transfers</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>User fee reduction</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing instructional materials</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Micronutrient intervention</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train school management</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interventions cost 0-3% of standard costs</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interventions cost 4-9% of standard costs</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interventions cost 10% or more of standard costs</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The improvements are based on a baseline of 50 percent of enrollment, completion, or reaching learning targets and measured as percentage points gained. The costs are estimated relative to average baseline costs — with average class size, materials, support, and salaries. The green bars pertain to those interventions that are related to teaching methods and teacher incentives, while the grey bars pertain to all other types of interventions.
Ensuring inclusive education for ethnolinguistic minority children in the COVID-19 era

Compounded disadvantages

Mother tongue-based education is a key factor in both school enrolment and school survivability for ethnolinguistic minority children. Such children face multiple and compounding disadvantages in their efforts to enrol and stay in school, including:

- **Remoteness**, as many live in areas with limited infrastructure (electricity, internet, television, sealed roads) impacting conventional schooling as well as delivery of print or online distance learning materials;

- **Poverty**, as many ethnolinguistic minority families lack adequate economic resources to either support online learning or ensure that their children (re)enrol in school;

- **Language barriers**, as many of these children will have lost valuable time in learning in their own languages (where mother tongue-based programme are available)
4

British Council position on English in mother tongue-based multilingual education

- An evidence-based approach to our work in English is necessary to arrive at an informed position on salient issues.
- Important research findings show that if young students in low- or middle-income countries are taught in their own or a familiar language, rather than English, they are more likely to understand what they are learning and be more successful academically (deciding in L2 as a subject with benefits to education, the economy and society.
- Students have the right to access both the school curriculum in their own or a familiar language and to receive quality English language learning experiences.
- Fluency in English is best served through strengthening the teaching of EAL. Therefore EMI at primary school level in low- or middle-income countries is not beneficial for it is a policy or practice we support.
- Requests for support for English in basic education can be reviewed using the ‘do no harm’ principle, focusing on improving the quality of teaching and learning in EAL.
- At primary level support can be channelled to develop quality teaching and teacher education in English as a subject and to promote equal access to English language learning opportunities. Reaching disadvantaged groups, the poorest or marginalised – rural children, those from ethnic minorities, young female learners, etc. – presents a particular challenge, which all should seek to meet.
- The MoE debate is complicated and multi-faceted, requiring further research with a particular focus on classrooms and teaching/learning processes. In multilingual classrooms there may be a mismatch between a regional or national language and students’ (own language) forming a barrier to mother tongue-based multilingual education. Further, there are multilingual education contexts where teachers are not conversant with the language of the students.
- At times there may be a lack of alignment between the MoE language policies adopted by ministries of education and that of educational partners. In such cases, all may work together to identify ways and means of addressing the L2 proficiency gap, and to enhance the quality of work in English as subject within a mother tongue-based multilingual education framework.
- The British Council aims to clearly communicate its position on English in mother tongue-based multilingual education, and seeks to prevent misconceptions arising about the British Council seeking to promote English over mother tongue.

This position is summarised in the short Juba Declaration (Appendix A) and will be reviewed on a regular basis in line with new findings into MoE within the field of language policy, planning or practice.
A few countries with mother tongue policies...

- Cambodia – MTB-MLE in 6 languages
- Thailand – MBT-MLE in 8 languages
- Philippines – MTB-MLE in 65 languages, including sign language
- Ethiopia – MTB-MLE in 30 languages

- What about famous Finland?
  - Finland is home to many ethnic minority and migrant children. Over 200 Finnish schools operate bilingual programmes, where the student’s mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction and Finnish is taught as a second language. Minority languages used in Finnish schools include Arabic, Somali, Russian, Vietnamese, Estonian, Saami and Swedish (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2017).
ขอบคุณ ครับ Terima kasih
謝謝你 நன்னி
Thank you

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